



For Immediate Release

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State Emergency Response Official Urges Caution with Alternative Heating Sources

INDIANAPOLIS -- With temperatures dropping and people returning to their homes after flooding in Northwest Indiana, alternative heating sources will become more commonplace, and a state emergency response official is urging caution.

"Everyone wants to be comfortable in their homes," said Phil Brown, interim director of IDHS emergency response division. "Sometimes alternative heating sources are used, which can cause injury, death and property damage. We're urging caution and want you and your family to be safe."

According to NFPA, in 2005, heating equipment was involved in an estimated 62,200 reported home structure fires, 670 deaths, 1,550 injuries, and \$909 million in direct property damage.

The NFPA and CPSC recommend the following heating safety tips:

- Space heaters need space. Keep all things that can burn, such as paper, bedding or furniture, at least 3 feet away from heating equipment.
- Turn portable heaters off when you go to bed or leave the room.
- Plug power cords only into outlets with sufficient capacity and never into an extension cord.
- Inspect for cracked, frayed or broken plugs or loose connections. Replace before using.
- Have your chimney inspected each year and cleaned if necessary.
- Use a sturdy fireplace screen.
- Allow ashes to cool before disposing. Dispose of ashes in a metal container.
- Install smoke alarms in every bedroom, outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home. For the best protection interconnect all smoke alarms throughout the home — when one sounds, they all sound. Test smoke alarms at least once a month.
- Install and maintain a carbon monoxide alarm in a central location outside each sleeping area.
- Never use an oven to heat your home.
- For fuel assistance, contact the National Fuel Funds Network at 1-202-824-0660.

In 2005, the State of Indiana consolidated all of its emergency management and homeland security efforts into one department by creating the Indiana Department of Homeland Security (IDHS). The divisions of IDHS are Emergency Response, Fire and Building Safety; the Indiana Intelligence Fusion Center; Planning and Assessment; Preparedness and Training; and Support Services. These divisions intertwine to accomplish the central mission of IDHS: safeguarding the lives and property of the citizens of Indiana.

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